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CHINA MILITARY DIGEST

JANUARY 2025

- Xi Jinping and other senior leaders of the Chinese military inspected the PLA Units separately
- China sent PLA delegation to Japan
- The Philippines held two military exercises in the South China Sea
- China and Indonesia held three high-level military meetings in January
- The first Type-054B frigate of the Chinese Navy was commissioned

Xi Jinping and other senior leaders of the Chinese military inspected the PLA Units separately carrying the message of war readiness and fighting corruption

In late January, senior leaders of the Chinese military [inspected](#) the PLA Units separately carrying the message of war readiness and fighting corruption. He Weidong, Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), [visited](#) the troops stationed in Beijing on January 22. He inspected a brigade of the Air Force radar corps and a brigade of the transport and search and rescue aviation corps. He emphasized to faithfully perform their duties and strengthen combat readiness. Similarly, on January 24, Xi Jinping [inspected](#) the PLA Northern Theatre Command (NTC), and met with officers and soldiers of the PLA Northern Theatre Command. He [held](#) a video call with officers and soldiers of a brigade task force of the Southern Theatre Command (STC) Army, a unit of a PLA Navy missile regiment of the PLA Eastern Theatre Command, a ground-to-air missile battalion of the PLA Central Theatre Command Air Force, a monitoring and early warning station of the military aerospace force, the 2nd Battalion of a motor transport regiment of the Cengzhou Joint Logistics Support Center, and the 3rd Battalion of a motor transport regiment of the Zhengzhou Joint Logistics Support Center, and the 3rd Battalion of the Tibet Detachment of the People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) Tibet Corps. He was briefed on the combat readiness duties and mission execution status of the forces and commended their dedication and accomplishments. Xi Jinping urged the troops to enhance their combat readiness and effectively prepare to respond to any emergencies. On January 26, Zhang Youxia, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, [visited](#) a

certain unit of the PLA Information Support Force to inspect the officers and soldiers. He emphasised to strengthen combat readiness, and listened to the work report. "We should severely investigate and deal with corruption issues surrounding officers and soldiers," he added. During this investigation, Zhang Youxia reiterated the relevant requirements of accelerating the task of building the Network Information System. He stressed to enrich the new domain and new quality combat forces.

China sent PLA delegation to Japan

On the morning of January 14, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi confirmed at a regular press conference that the PLA Eastern Theatre Command delegation [led](#) by PLA Major General Chen Yueqi, Deputy Commander of the Theatre Command from China had arrived in Japan on January 13 and would stay until January 17. For the first time in five years, China has sent a sizeable military delegation to Japan for a week-long visit. This visit is special because unlike before it was formal meeting with the leaders of the Japanese Ministry of Defense and the Joint Staff of the Japan's Self-Defense Forces. The purpose of the visit is to "strengthen mutual understanding and trust, while advancing defense exchanges between the two countries," said the Chinese Ministry of National Defense. This has happened after a series of initiatives taken from both sides. For instance, in April 2023, the military hotline was finally opened after a gap of 4 years. The hotline was open, but it has never been used. In July 2023, a delegation of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) visited China. In May 2024, Zhang Baoqun, a PLA Major General, led a 20-member delegation to Japan. It was also the first time that PLA cadres visited Japan in 5 years. In November 2024, Nagaoka

Yoshinori, a first-class sea captain of the Defense Department of the Japan Self-Defense Force Maritime Staff Office, [led](#) a delegation to China for a nine-day exchange program. The delegation made a trip to Confucius's hometown in Oufu and the Guangzhou base of the southern military region Navy. This series of mutual visits are all "Japan-China Colonel-level Officer Exchange" hosted by the "civilian group" Sasakawa Peace Foundation, which is still unofficial in nature. In the past, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation of Japan has hosted the "Japan-China Colonel-level Officer Exchange" for 20 years. Sino-Japanese military exchanges [dates back](#) to 1974 when the two sides set up military attaché offices. The normal military exchanges between the two countries began in the late 1970s. In the past few years, the military exchanges between China and Japan have been relatively smooth. It was only briefly interrupted from 1989 to 1995 and after the outbreak of the epidemic in 2020. At the end of 2024, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, and Japanese Ambassador to China Kenji Kanasugi were interviewed by Japanese mainstream media, clearly expressing their desire to "improve Sino-Japanese relations" and showing a rare attitude of goodwill.

The Philippines held two military exercises in the South China Sea

The Philippine military [said](#) in a statement on January 19 that it held "maritime cooperation activities" with the United States from January 17-18. This is the first such joint exercise in 2025 and the fifth since the US – Philippine joint military exercise was launched in 2023. According to AFP, the US-Philippines "maritime cooperation activities" were held in Palawan Island and nearby South China Sea waters. The US aircraft carrier battle group

[included](#) the F-35C stealth fighter, F/A – 18 E/F "Super Hornet", EA-18G "Growler" electronic warfare aircraft, etc. The Philippine sent the frigate Antonio Luna, the patrol ship Andres Bonifacio, two FA-50 fighter jets and air force search and rescue equipment. On January 18, the Philippine Navy spokesperson John Percy Alkes stated that the activity was a "normal part of naval operations." In [response](#) to this, the PLA organized combat readiness patrols and launched a strong counterattack against the joint military exercises of the United States and the Philippines. It is worth noting that shortly before the Philippines announced the exercises, China and the Philippines held the tenth meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the South China Sea on January 16. Besides, the Philippine Navy also launched an annual exercise near Huangyan Island. The Philippines said that the exercise was aimed at improving their navy's homeland defense capabilities. In response to the Philippine's military exercises in the South China Sea, the PLA Southern Theatre Command troops have successively carried out large-scale patrol and alert operations near Huangyan Island.

China and Indonesia held three high-level military meetings in January

In January, China and Indonesia held three high-level meetings. The Indonesian Coast Guard (Bakamla) delegation, led by Vice Admiral of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) Dr. Irvansyah, visited Beijing from January 7 to 11. The Bakamla (Indonesian Maritime Security Agency)- Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) Maritime Security Talks was held on January 8, 2025. This meeting, a direct follow-up to agreements [made](#) by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and Chinese President Xi Jinping in November 2024, focused on: Strengthening maritime security; Ensuring safe shipping

lanes; and Combating transnational crimes such as illegal fishing. The second meeting held during Liu Zhenli, Chief of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, two-day [visit](#) to Indonesia from January 10 to 11, Liu Zhenli respectively met with Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsuddin and Indonesian Military Chief General Agus Subiyanto in Jakarta, said a statement released by China's Ministry of National defense on January 11. The Indonesian side said the relations between the two militaries are developing in good momentum and it is hoped that the two militaries should further strengthen pragmatic cooperation in various fields such as personnel exchanges and joint exercises and training. Li Zhenli stated that China views the China-Indonesia relationship from a strategic level and long-term perspective. The meeting resulted in agreements to: Expand joint military exercises; increase personnel exchanges; and Explore opportunities for military technology transfers. The third meeting was held on January 22, Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsuddin [hold](#) defense talks with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun in Beijing. The talks also touched on the use of dialogue to resolve issues in the region.

The first Type-054B frigate of the Chinese Navy was commissioned

The first type-054 frigate of the Chinese Navy, Luohe, was [commissioned](#) at a military port in Qingdao, Shandong on the morning of January 22. The Chinese-made type-054B frigate is the third largest frigate in terms of size with a full load displacement of more than 5,000 tons, after the US Navy Constellation-class frigate with a displacement of 7,400 tons and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force Mogami-class frigate with full load displacement of 5,500 tons. The ship was [launched](#) in 2023 and underwent sea trials

last year. The warship is indigenously developed by China, and major advances had been made in ship's stealth technology, combat command system, and firepower integrated control that adds to the frigates overall performance. With the entry of the type-54B "Luohe" frigate, the Chinese Navy has a total of 5 types of missile frigates in service, including the type-053H3, type-054, type-054A, type-054B, and type 056A, and the total number of PLA Navy frigates in service is 102. China [has](#) around 234 warships compared to the US Navy's 219, including around 50 frigates and the same number of destroyers. The French "Navy News Network" [reported](#) that the total length of type-054B is about 150 meters, about 15 meters longer than type-054A, and the width is about 17 meters, 1 meter wider than type-054A. In terms of electromagnetic capabilities, the Type-054B mainly uses a two-sided active phased array. In terms of weapon system, the Type-054B frigate is equipped with H/PJ-87 100 mm main gun (previously the type-054A type mostly used 76mm guns), and 32 vertical launch units. The new frigate Type-054B is designed to incorporate into naval aircraft carrier battle group to carry out medium- and long-range anti-submarine missions, and medium-and short-range air defense and surface warfare tasks. At the same time, the type-054B frigate will also undertake complex fleet service tasks such as forward reconnaissance, formation alert, escort of the party's fleet, verification of suspicious ships, defense against small speedboat attacks, and maritime rescue. Therefore, the main focus in designing the type-054B is on doing miscellaneous tasks. It is worth [noting](#) that the hangar space of the type-054B is larger than that of the type-054A, and it can carry the Z-20F multi-purpose shipborne helicopter. The type-054B can also operate vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drones.